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# Fort Fairfield a Report to Our Citizens 2011

Fort Fairfield (Me.)

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# FORT FAIRFIELD

- A PASSION FOR COMMUNITY -

## A Report to Our Citizens 2011

### About Fort Fairfield

Fort Fairfield operates under the council/manager form of government. The voters elect five council members to govern and establish policies for the benefit of its citizens. After fifteen years on the Council Ruel Flannery retired and was replaced by John Herold who joins Terry Greenier, David McCrea, Mark Babin and Council Chairperson Kim Murchison. The Town Manager, Dan Foster serves at the will of the Council and is responsible for implementing policy, preparing and managing the annual budget and manages the day to day operations. Department Heads include William Campbell Police Chief, Paul Durepo Fire Chief, George Watson Public Works Director, Michael Bosse Director of Marketing and Economic Development, Sharon Nadeau Librarian and Tony Levesque who is the Community Development Director, Town Assessor, and the Code Enforcement Officer.

Fort Fairfield's population of 3,496 makes it the sixth largest community in Aroostook County. Located in Central Aroostook County its 72 square miles is situated along the Canadian border on the north and Caribou and Presque Isle on the south. At 401 feet above sea level, the average temperatures range between the single digits in the winter to mid 70's in the summer with an average annual snowfall of 90 inches.

Fort Fairfield is home of the Maine Potato Blossom Festival which is held each year in July. This popular event honors our agricultural heritage and provides a venue

for families and graduating classes to come together rekindling relationships and enjoying the many festivities. Our focus on families and community creates an aura of community togetherness and a collaborative can do spirit.

### Selected Highlights

- Recently received surplus government roadway equipment at a value of \$750,000
- Continually expanding and upgrading with paths and pavilions, Riverside Park to better serve the community.
- Recently completed approximately 1.5 of paved walking pathways throughout the community.
- Obtained a \$500,000.00 bond to pave 14 miles of roadways in Fort Fairfield.
- Changed 174 streetlights to energy saving LEDs saving approximately \$20,000 per year in electrical cost.
- Changed over public buildings from fuel oil burners to coal burners realizing an annual savings of \$35,000 to \$40,000
- Animal control now operates a temporary shelter for stray animals in our community which has resulted in a significant savings for the town.
- The Recreation Department facilitates over 50 youth, teen and adult programs with over 400 youth and teens participating.

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What are the costs associated with managing our community services and where does the money come from?

We have created a simple spreadsheet to highlight the financial information for Fort Fairfield. A more detailed financial analysis can be found in our audited annual financial statement which is located on our website, [www.fortfairfield.org](http://www.fortfairfield.org). (See page 3.)



- A Passion for Community -

# Goals & Objectives

*Fiscal Year 2012-2013*



Through the Fort Fairfield Vision Committee the Economic Development Investment Strategy was developed and is currently being administered by The Quality of Place Council as established by the Fort Fairfield Town Council. As its name suggests the goal of this organization is to facilitate economic development that not only focuses on increased valuation but on the amenities that people are looking for that will enhance the quality of their lives. Our community services, the quality of our educational system for all citizens, the recreational opportunities, quality housing, accessible healthcare, business development, particularly agricultural development and the enhancement of our downtown all contribute to a sustainable economic and quality of life environment.

To this end the Quality of Place Council has been established as an independent non profit organization and recently has received its 501 c 3 IRS designation. One of its responsibilities is the establishment of a Community Foundation that will allow those who wish to can make tax deductible contributions to the Foundation for the benefit of this community.

In collaboration with the Fort Fairfield Housing Authority and the Fort Fairfield Residential Development Corporation, the Town is developing a 25 unit Senior Citizens Housing Complex located on Presque Isle Street behind the Family Dollar Store. This project has been approved and will be financed through the Maine State Housing Authority and is expected to start construction this summer.

The Town is also working with Pines Health Services and Cary Medical Center to build a new health clinic that will pro-

vide the citizens of Fort Fairfield with an enhanced level of healthcare services. The clinic will be located adjacent to the new senior citizens complex providing ease of access to our senior citizens. Construction is currently scheduled for late summer.

We are in the process of establishing a "Homebuyers Program" where we in collaboration with the Frontier Development Corporation and the County Federal Credit Union will be building homes in an approved subdivision located off the Currier Road. Our goal is to provide quality homes for working families at a reasonable cost.

We currently are working with the new owners of the biomass plant, ReEnergy Holdings, LLC who are interested in expanding their facility to create new business opportunities allowing for a more consistent and reliable revenue stream.

We are working with several developers who are interested in locating wind turbines for the purpose of generating renewable electricity. This project which has the potential of generating significant tax revenues continues to work through the regulatory process and solidifying their financial funding.

We continue to market our community through our web page, press releases and the many organizations that we belong to or work with on a daily basis. How we are perceived by the outside world is critical to our long term success. Our commitment to this community's quality of life is valued over political expediency and progress is achieved through cooperation rather than confrontation.

## **Property Taxes:**

Taxes collected on Residential & Commercial Properties including ; machinery & equipment and farm land

## **Revenue Sharing:**

This is a distribution from the State from sales and income taxes. This has been reduced by \$262,000 (42%) over the last four years due to State cutbacks.

## **MDOT Road Repairs:**

Monies received from MDOT to be used on local road repairs.

## **Excise Tax:**

This tax is collected when you register your vehicles in the Town Office

## **Pilot Payments:**

(Payment in lieu of taxes) is from non profits that own real estate and make a payment to help pay cover the cost of services that they receive from the community

## **Surplus/Savings:**

Each year we try to spend less than what was approved in our budget, these funds are carried forward to help with the next year's budget. Savings is our undesignated surplus which we rarely use for operational costs. This year is one of those exceptions.

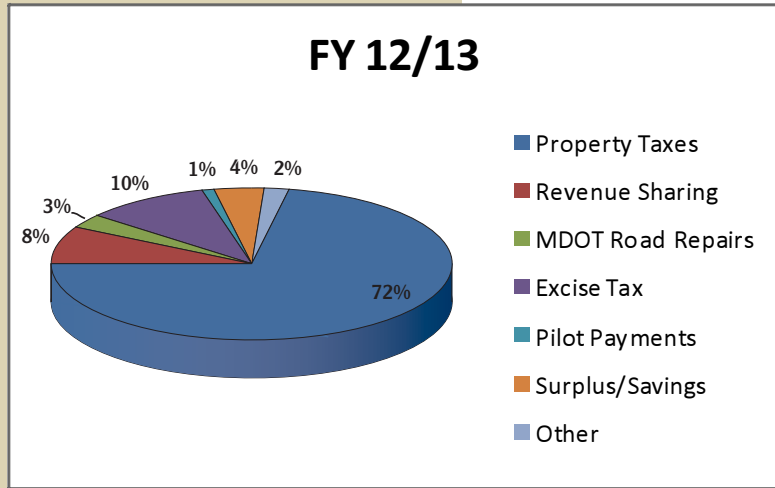




# How We Have Progressed

## Fiscal Year 2011-2012

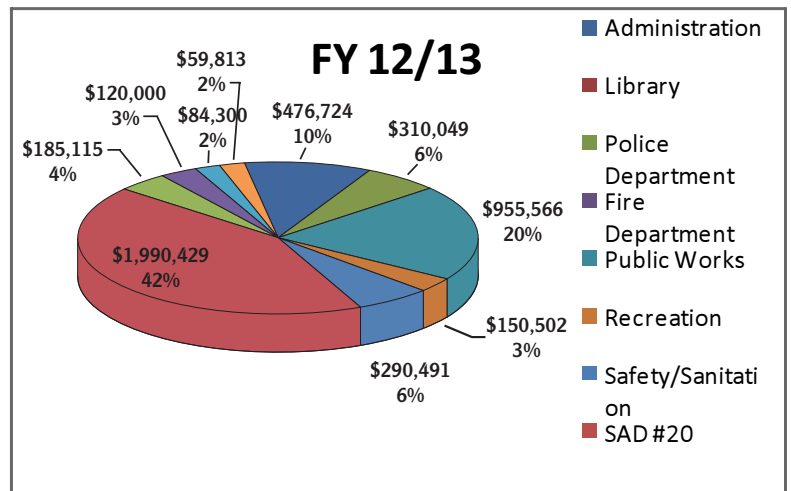
### Fort Fairfield Revenues



Revenues	FY 11/12	FY 12/13
Property Taxes	\$3,393,700	\$3,516,970
Revenue Sharing	\$370,000	\$370,000
MDOT Road Repairs	\$111,540	\$111,540
Excise Tax	\$480,000	\$480,000
Pilot Payments	\$54,200	\$44,700
Surplus/Savings	\$190,000	\$195,000
Other	\$102,660	\$103,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,702,100</b>	<b>\$4,821,410</b>

### Fort Fairfield Expenses

Expenses:	FY 11/12	FY 12/13
Administration	\$468,012	\$476,724
Library	\$87,476	\$88,593
Police Department	\$291,924	\$310,049
Fire Department	\$98,164	\$101,462
Public Works	\$933,992	\$955,566
Recreation	\$136,649	\$150,502
Safety/Sanitation	\$282,755	\$290,491
SAD #20	\$1,921,937	\$1,990,429
Aroostook County	\$177,873	\$185,115
Capital Reserve	\$115,000	\$120,000
Insurances	\$91,500	\$84,300
Other	\$96,050	\$59,831
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$4,701,332</b>	<b>\$4,813,062</b>



*The functions of the individual departments are self explanatory; Safety/Sanitation covers costs associated with our street lights, Tri Community Landfill, The Ambulance Service and our Fire Hydrant Assessment from the Utilities District. The Capital Reserve account is used primarily to pay down our debt on the new highway garage, the municipal building and new swimming pools.*

# Moving Forward

2012-2013

Since 2008 we have lost \$262,000 in State Revenue Sharing, had an increase in funding to SAD #20 of \$164,984 and lost \$151,000 in tax revenue with the demolition of the ACP Facility. These changes have increased the burden to our local taxpayer \$577,984.00 representing 12% of our total budget.



Through these difficult times the Town and the school are constantly looking to reduce our operating costs being always mindful of the need to provide quality services that citizens fully expect to receive. Until this year we have been able to maintain our services without raising the mil rate, but unfortunately the recent loss of ACP has put our budget so egregiously out of balance that an increase in taxes was unavoidable.

We continue to reach out to the business community to expand our tax base with some success. Most recently Cavendish Agri-Services new facility was a welcome addition to our community.

Your concerns and questions are important to us and I would strongly encourage you to contact me directly to discuss whatever is on your mind. I can be reached at the town office or click on me at [www.fortfairfield.org](http://www.fortfairfield.org).

All the very best.

*Dan*

**Dan Foster, Town Manager**  
**Town of Fort Fairfield**  
**18 Community Drive**  
**Fort Fairfield, ME 04742**  
**207.472.3800**

## Public Safety Info

- ◆ We currently have 14 volunteer fire fighters dedicating over 233 hours for a Firefighter 1&2 academy, upon successful completion, they will be state certified Firefighter 2. This certification is the same training that Full-time fire fighters receive throughout the state.
- ◆ Over the last 12 years the fire department has been able to reduce their operating budget by fifty percent while at the same time improving the town's ISO rating. The result of this reduces the citizens insurance premiums.
- ◆ On top of reducing the fire department's budget, we have also received government surplus equipment at no cost to the town. In turn we have acquired \$500,000 worth of vehicles, equipment and tools.
- ◆ Last year the Police Department handled 2,669 calls for service and had a 60% clearance rate in all of the index crimes reported. Compared with the statewide average clearance rate of 29.2% for the same time period, the Police Department experienced a significantly better clearance rate.
- ◆ We had a 100% clearance rate in Domestic Assault cases and a 40% clearance rate in Theft related offenses.
- ◆ Police Department meets with the Sunshine Club on a regular basis to keep in touch with the older citizens in our community and to stay in tune with their concerns and needs.

## We want to hear from you!

Do you like this report?  
Would you like to see other information?  
Please let us know by contacting Dan Foster by phone at (207) 472-3800 For more information on our services, visit our website at [www.fortfairfield.org](http://www.fortfairfield.org)

Photos courtesy of Paul Cyr. For more of Paul's work see:  
[www.crownofmaine.com/paulcyr/](http://www.crownofmaine.com/paulcyr/)



*A Passion for Community*